

Sing! Sing! Sing!

A Lesson on the Importance of Music

Playgroup #13

Materials Needed

- Paper and pen for each mother
- CD of various types of music
- Materials to demonstrate how to make your own instrument – your choice see hand out for ideas

Handouts

- Homemade Musical Instruments
- Songs and Rhymes

Introduction

Have background music playing as the mothers and children arrive.

Have a discussion about your favorite songs both growing up and currently. Discuss what type of music it is, what the lyrics say, and how it makes you feel. Use a CD that has a wide variety of music on it such as classical, hard rock, country, rap, love songs, and pop. Play a little of each song and notice the change in how it makes you feel. As you consider the difference each song has on you, contemplate its impact on your young children.

Give each mom a blank sheet of paper and tell them that they are going to have a “pop quiz.” Ask them to answer the following questions:

1. True or False - Music delights and entertains children.
2. True or False - Music helps mold their mental, emotional, social, and physical development.
3. True or False - Listening to music improves concentration and speech abilities.
4. True or False - Music can stimulate brain growth in the womb and throughout early childhood.
5. Is there such thing as the Mozart Effect?

Answers: 1. True, children love to bounce, clap, and dance to music; 2. True, music helps children develop all these and more; 3. True, which often advances reading and language skills; 4. True, children can hear before they are even born; 5. Yes, much more research is needed, but so far studies have shown an amazing impact of classical music, like that of Mozart, on young children's development.

Go over the answers with the mothers in your playgroup. Explain to them that music can truly have an amazing impact on a child's development. It is important to recognize that this impact can be positive or negative and it is important for parents to know these impacts and foster the positive.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- Understand the benefits of child development that come from music
- Know how to incorporate music into your child's life
- Know how to make simple homemade instruments

Why is Music Important for my Child?

Music can have many wonderful effects on children aside from entertainment. Studies have shown that certain types of music may help develop a child's brain power. We should encourage our children as early as possible to listen to and make music. Many studies show that teaching music to children increases their learning ability and capacity. Listening to their favorite nursery rhymes and songs fosters their language development. Listening to calm, slow music such as lullabies can also help to sooth your child. Listening to fast, upbeat music can help your children be active. Music is not only good for your child, but it is a lot of fun!

Far More Good than Meets the Ear: Ways Music Benefits your child

- **Attachment**
Babies are able to hear before they even leave the mother's womb. This allows them to hear music and communicate before they are even born as they react to the things they hear.
- **Language Development**
Listening to music stimulates brain growth and enhances language development. As infants are enticed by the music they are also able to focus on the lyrics which teach them about speech and language in general. As they hear the words they categorize the words. Through music they are able to learn vocabulary, expressiveness, speech and enhance their reading and writing skills.
- **Concentration**
The rhythm of music catches the baby's attention, this allows him/her to focus and concentrate on the lyrics. Learning this skill early also promotes concentration later in life. It also improves a child's ability to remember and memorize. Learning a musical instrument will also help your child develop concentration, as he/she must focus on a particular activity over extended periods of time.
- **Emotional Awareness**
Music has major effects on ones emotions and attitudes. As children listen to various types of music they learn to better understand what they are feeling. Understanding this promotes positive self-awareness and good communication. Music also introduces children to a wide variety of emotional expression and creativity.

- **Relaxation**
Babies are used to hearing sounds to relax. As a developing baby in the womb they are used to hearing the soothing sounds of the mother's heartbeat, and the swooshing sounds of blood running through her body. Researchers acknowledge that certain types of music can aid relaxation by lowering heart rates and blood pressure.
- **Coordination and Motor Development**
Listening to music enhances motor development as children bounce and dance to music. It increases muscle strength and also promotes learning to crawl, walk, skip, and run. Practicing musical instruments also improves hand-eye coordination. Children develop important motor skills when playing music just as they do when playing different sports.
- **Self-Confidence**
Along with the benefits on language development as children become familiar with the words and sounds they become more confident in their ability to speak. Music gives them enthusiasm and skills that allow them to teach themselves. Learning and playing instruments also encourage self-confidence. The encouragement of teachers and the enthusiasm of proud parents build a sense of pride and confidence in the child. Moreover, children who practice self-expression and creativity often become better communicators later in life.
- **Patience and Perseverance**
Learning a musical instrument fosters children to develop patience and perseverance. These skills will help them later in life when they must tackle other more difficult challenges.

Benefits of Rhymes

Rhymes are especially great for young children. They contribute in many powerful ways to a child's development. Here's how:

- **Language and Social Development**
When a baby listens to rhymes and songs they become a powerful language teaching tool. The simple repetitive songs catch their attention and encourage them to listen carefully. They are able to develop their language skills as they become familiar with the songs. There are three main aspects of rhymes and songs that each contributes to the child's language development: Repetition, Rhythm, and Rhyme.
- **Repetition**
As parents recite the same phrases over and over it organizes the baby's brain to speak and hear language. Through repetition the baby learns what to expect and is able to anticipate the words he will hear. Repetition also strengthens the baby's memory.

- **Rhythm**
As parents recite rhymes and songs they emphasize particular syllables and words with their voice. Babies are born with a sense of rhythm which allows the beat of songs and rhymes attract their attention. The rhythm is what keeps their attention as they ingest this complex language they are hearing.
- **Rhyme**
Babies are born ready to learn and are able to process all speech sounds. In order for them to incorporate those sounds into their own language they must hear them again and again. Babies learn language by mentally categorizing the sounds they hear into groupings that sound similar. Rhymes are perfect for learning language because they are so repetitive.
- **Playtime and Attachment**
Rhymes and songs are great tools for language development but they can also be lot of fun. Parent and child are able to interact as they sing, dance, and do motions together. This strengthens the attachment between parent and child.

Selecting Music for Children

0 to 2 Years

Before birth children can hear music and use it to start developing their language. Reciting rhymes and songs that have a lot of repetition is best for fostering this language development. This is also a wonderful time to sing to your baby, this will continue to strengthen language, but will also sooth the baby. They will also like to dance and move with you to the beat.

3 to 4 Years

Children begin to take a real interest in music at this age. It is a great time for parents to mix music with games and body movements such as clapping, waving, jumping, and dancing. It is also a great time to have your children play simple instruments that can be made with household products; encourage children to accompany the music.

4 to 5 Years

At this age children are much more aware of song lyrics. It is important to choose music with appropriate lyrics that will foster fun, learning, and development. Children will still enjoy making their own music at this age, but will also be interested in listening to others music.

6 to 10 Years

At this age children start learning that music has structure. They will enjoy rhyming, repetition, and experiment with different sounds. This is the ideal time to actively teach a child a musical instrument.

Activity

Choose an instrument from the handout and demonstrate how simple it is to make a homemade instrument. Children will be able to color and decorate the instruments and make them their own. This will make them feel special and take pride in their work. Children will love making and playing instruments. Be creative, your imagination is the limit.

Suggested Reading

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom
By Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault

The Wheels on the Bus
By Jim Becker and Andy Mayer
(There are many versions of this book)

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

Utah County Health Department, <http://www.co.utah.ut.us/dept/health/>

Build Your Baby's Brain Through the Power of Music, Dr. Don Campbell

The Benefits of Music on Child Development, Jovanka Ciales and Paul Borgese